

(2) incubating the growth surface of step (1) under growth-promoting conditions, whereby the human marrow stromal cells proliferate.

2. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein in step (1) the initial density of the isolated human marrow stromal cells is less than about 25 cells per square centimeter of growth surface.

3. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein in step (1) the initial density of the isolated human marrow stromal cells is less than about 12 cells per square centimeter of growth surface.

4. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein in step (1) the initial density of the isolated human marrow stromal cells is less than about 10 cells per square centimeter of growth surface.

5. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein in step (1) the initial density of the isolated human marrow stromal cells is less than about 6 cells per square centimeter of growth surface.

6. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein in step (1) the initial density of the isolated human marrow stromal cells is less than about 3 cells per square centimeter of growth surface.

7. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein in step (1) the initial density of the isolated human marrow stromal cells is less than about 1.5 cells per square centimeter of growth surface.

8. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein in step (1) the initial density of the isolated human marrow stromal cells is less than about 1.0 cells per square centimeter of growth surface.

9. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein in step (1) the initial density of the isolated human marrow stromal cells is at least about 0.5 cells per square centimeter of growth surface.

10. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein after step (2) the human marrow stromal cells are harvested from the growth surface following not more than about 14 days of incubation.

11. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein after step (2) the human marrow stromal cells are harvested from the growth surface following not more than about 10 days of incubation.

12. (Amended) The method of claim 1, further wherein
(3) the proliferated human marrow stromal cells of step (2) are harvested and are provided to a second growth surface along with a growth medium such that the initial density of the harvested cells is less than about 50 cells per square centimeter of second growth surface;
(4) the second growth surface is incubated under growth-promoting conditions, whereby the human marrow stromal cells on the second growth surface proliferate; and
(5) the human marrow stromal cells on the second growth surface are harvested.

13. (Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein in step (3) the harvested human marrow stromal cells are seeded on the second growth surface at an initial density of about 3 cells per square centimeter.

14. (Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein in step (5) the human marrow stromal cells are harvested from the second growth surface following not more than about 14 days of incubation.

15. (Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein in step (5) the human marrow stromal cells are harvested from the second growth surface following not more than about 10 days incubation.

16. (Amended) The method of claim 12, further wherein

(6) cells harvested from the second growth surface in step (5) and a growth medium are provided to a third growth surface such that the initial density of the human marrow stromal cells harvested from the second growth surface is less than about 50 cells per square centimeter of the third growth surface and

(7) the third growth surface is incubated under growth-promoting conditions, whereby the human marrow stromal cells on the third growth surface proliferate; and

(8) the human marrow stromal cells on the third growth surface are harvested.

17. (Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein in step (8) the human marrow stromal cells are harvested from the third growth surface following not more than about 14 days of incubation.

18. (Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein in step (8) the human marrow stromal cells are harvested following not more than about 10 days of incubation.

19. (Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein in step (6) the human marrow stromal cells are seeded on the third growth surface at an initial density of about 3 cells per square centimeter.

22. (Amended) The method of claim 1, further wherein in step (1) a growth factor is added to the growth medium.

32. (Amended) A method of assessing the expandability of isolated human marrow stromal cells *in vitro*, the method comprising incubating isolated human marrow stromal cells on a surface in the presence of a growth medium at an initial density of less than about 50 cells per square centimeter of surface and assessing the colony-forming efficiency of the human marrow stromal cells, whereby the expandability of the human marrow stromal cells is approximately proportional to the colony-forming efficiency of the human marrow stromal cells.